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Hal Verb
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Dear Hal:

It's been one week since I returned from Dallas where, as you know, I attended and spoke for the annual Lancer JFK conference. I must say that during all the time I was there I kept thinking if only you had been there I know you would have enjoyed it. So many people I met there spoke so highly of you and were well aware of your great works.

In fact I invited a friend of mine whose name is Hal McDermid from San Francisco. He is a lawyer and despite his age (72) he still keeps working. I met him several months ago when I attended an event and because people at this event knew of my interest in the case they said "you've got to meet this guy - he has a very unusual tale to tell about the assassination." Sure enough, it certainly was unusual as I'll describe here. What happened is that either on the day of the assassination or no later than the day after, my friend decided to call the Dallas police station & try to represent Oswald. Apparently it was Curry who answered & told Hal, "Well, you can't do that on the phone - you'll have to come down & fill out all the papers." Well, Hal never did go down (at the time he was living in Chicago but later on moved to S.F.). Hal said the law office he worked for was quite upset about what Hal did and even more so when several members of the Warren Commission came to see him to ask about his interest in representing Oswald. The Secret Service also came to see him. Hal says this had a lot to

do with his losing his job in Chicago (although there may have been other reasons) but somehow he wound up coming to S.F. Hal is a real fighter & uses blunt language when he sees or hears something he thinks is foolish or dumb. He's been a progressive all his life & has represented anti-Vietnam war activists & has marched against the war. He is definitely someone you should meet. There is another unusual thing about him & that is he once represented Sam Giacana, the mob boss. It had to do with the FBI constantly harassing him no matter where he went. Hal represented him on the basis of invasion of privacy.

Because I began to tell him of my interest in the JFK case Hal decided to go to the Lancer conference. I told him about you but he never read any of your works but he did have a fairly general knowledge of the whole case. I guess he got some of his knowledge from various books but I never asked him which ones he had read.

By the way while at the Lancer conference I introduced Hal to Paul Hallor and at one time we all went to a restaurant known as the "Fish Place". Apparently Paul had eaten there before & raved about the quality of the food. The quality was excellent <u>but</u> the prices were really high. In fact (& I know you won't believe this but it <u>is</u> true) there was on the menu a particular soup & the price on it was nearly $40.00 ($39 plus some cents)!!! I couldn't believe it when I saw it & when people asked me what was the "most shocking" thing I learned at this conference I tell them: the price listed in that menu! As I told Paul Hallor while we were eating that <u>this</u> was the "most shocking" thing of all & I said to Paul that what the restaurant should've done is - instead of the price - put "price on request". Then I told Paul that if the waiter came by I would say, "my request is that you <u>drastically</u> reduce the price!!"

I'm sure Paul will be writing you about the conference but one of the events that stood out was this night at the restaurant.

Lancer gave me the opportunity to give two different talks on two different days. My first talk was on the "Fair Play for Cuba" & its relevance to the case & my second talk was on the "Failures of the ARRB" on which I discussed 3 different areas (medical, photographic & Oswald's possible agency (U.S.) connections) none of which were remotely examined. By the way in one of your last letters you had suggested the work you had completed on the ARRB if I needed it. Actually I did refer to it and you probably didn't know I had obtained a copy from Clayton Ogilvie ~~some~~ some time ago. He was nice enough to forward a copy to me. Ogilvie is the fellow doing the work putting all your works & document references on the Internet. It is a long project but he's determined to do it. With virtually all references to the case being put on the Internet (both the good & the bad) Ogilvie's efforts are really impressive. Your work needs that kind of input & has to be preserved & he gives me every indication of doing a good job. So far I've not yet obtained a computer but all the researchers I've met (& even my friends) tell me how necessary it is for what I'm doing.

The Lancer conference also honored me in two ways besides letting me give two talks. It turns out that at the Saturday night banquet dinner they surprised me by giving the Mary Ferrell JFK Pioneer Award but this was their highest award which was "in recognition of lifetime contributions in the search for the truth ---." Before she gave me the award she had noted that you had called her attention to me way back in 1966 (I believe) but that we hadn't met (Mary & I) until 1992 the first convention.

In fact, today, I just got a letter from Mary saying that in all the years her award to me gave her "the most pleasure" in giving me that award. She also said in her letter that she only wished you had been there.

The second thrill for me at the Lancer event was when they gave me the chance (my second time, in fact) to address the crowd that gathered at Dealey Plaza virtually at the same time (12:30pm) JFK was shot. This was on Monday, Nov. 22, 1999 and just before I spoke a member of the Kennedy family spoke - Kerry McCarthy. She is the only one outspoken enough to "bolt" from the rest of the Kennedy clan & willing to identify herself with Lancer. (From a conversation I had with one researcher I learned that Kerry had confided to Debra ~~Conn~~ Conway - the co-editor of Lancer's publication - that none of the family believe there was no conspiracy. But, of course, you cannot get any of them to say so).

I've enclosed a copy of the speech I gave at the Knoll that day (11/22/99) & I think it's one of the best short & to the point - speeches I ever gave. Some of it I literally wrote, as I said in my speech, in the early morning hours when thoughts started to come into my head & I had to sit down & write before going back to bed. Whatever inspired me I was thinking of all kinds of quotations & literary allusions most probably because of my hobby of collecting quotations & recalling them when I need them which is certainly a great asset in either speaking or writing, I'm sure you'll agree.

You'll note the poem (about "buffs") & my reference to a Dylan Thomas line. You'd be interested in knowing that shortly after I spoke on the Knoll I met up with Ernest Brandt & his wife. His wife said to me, "Oh, I'm so glad you made reference to Dylan Thomas - he's one of my favorites!"

In case you may have forgotten, Brandt is the fellow I discovered on Elm Street back in 1993 & found out he is in the Zapruder film (Z-202) & Willis #5. When he pointed himself out to me she said he was "still wearing the same hat he wore on that day."

Brandt was with another fellow who can be seen in both the Z & Willis frames. And, if you'll recall, Brandt is a firm believer in the Warren Report of Lone assassin. He at one time was a docent for the "Sixth Floor Museum" but is no longer.

Both Gary Mack & Dave Perry showed up on the knoll on Monday, Nov. 22nd, 1999 & even though the crowd was smaller than last year's it seemed to be very enthusiastic in hearing what the Lancer speakers had to say. By the way even though COPA had no scheduled meetings they did meet informally at another hotel. Aguilar was not there but it is my understanding he is now its head. While at the knoll while I spoke members of COPA did hold up a banner & of course, so did Lancer. The Lancer one was quite long & could not be missed by whatever TV cameras were there & they were there. (There was virtually no mention in the Dallas Morning News about the event that amounted to anything).

I'd have to say that being able to give my 2 talks at the conference & then presented with my award plus my speech on the knoll made this event perhaps the best I've been to & the most personally rewarding.

Before I get into the enclosures (& there are many) I wanted to mention an up coming Symposium & Tour to be held in Dallas from April 12 to April 16, 2000 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel (about 1½ blocks from the knoll). The event is being put on by "History America tours" & supposedly will be televised on the "History Channel"! The event is being led by Conover Hunt (a member of the Hunt family who is a backer financially of the "Sixth Floor Museum"). It is a package deal costing $1,295.00 but this includes staying at the hotel, attending all conference talks & meetings, tours, and all dinners plus breakfasts.

Conover apparently chose these persons as "experts" for the Conference: Josiah Thompson, Gary Mack & Dave Perry. The witnesses selected are: Jim Leavelle, Hugh Aynesworth & Buell Wesley Frazier (who is a good friend of Dave Perry).

I called Thompson & asked him what he knew about this & he told me he is scheduled to give a talk on the "magic bullet" (you can imagine where he'll go with that!) but I don't know what Gary Mack or Perry will be doing. I did call Dave Perry & he said he'll get back to me.

There is a phone number that one can call (~~for tickets but the 800 number is not toll so you can't call to find out more~~). The 800 number to call is: #1-800-628-8542. They will send you a brochure on request.

When I did call that 800 number I reached a Pete Brown. I asked him what are the chances of my being on the panel & he said — sorry — but everything was all set & no one would be added (however, I'm going to still try & see if I can. I really would like to be there despite the high cost involved.

After I called I came across the name Pete Brown who co-authored a book on Marilyn Monro & her last day. I don't know if it's the same one but I'll eventually find out.

Now to get to the enclosures. All are self-explanatory but the one I particularly want to call your attention to is the seven stapled pages of which the top has a heading "International Trade Mart" (a letter from Clay Shaw to Holland McCombs).

I should first note that these seven pages were given out after Wallace Milam (an excellent researcher) gave a talk on Holland McCombs & the secret investigation Life magazine did on the JFK case.

As you'll see (on the 3rd page of this set) Wallace got these from the Holland McCombs files which is contained in the "Special Collections" at the University of Tennessee Martin. I did not know of this until Wallace gave his talk

There is stuff about the Z-film & from what Milam said in his talk that while Life was "supportive" of Josiah Thompson* it lost that interest in him (reasons not stated by Wallace but it may be in these files). According to Wallace there are some 7,000 pages that can be accessed. Up until Milam saw them no one else had.

Before I get into some of the stuff included in the seven pages one very intriguing comment Wallace made concerned Oswald's use of Hidell as an alias. Wallace said "Life" had concluded their investigation on this aspect & were pretty much convinced that Oswald chose the Hidell name basing it on a bartender whose name was Frankie Lynn Hydell (I'm not sure if Wallace spelled this last name out or I wrote it that way but obviously the files Milam has will show it one way or the other. This Frankie worked at a bar described as a "queer joint" in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Up to now I'd never heard of this—had you??

Another intriguing item Wallace spoke of was that the McCurry ~~Brothers~~ brothers supposedly hung out at this bar & allegedly these brothers also were with Oswald when he was handing out FPCC leaflets. Milam said there was WDSU footage showing the McCurry brothers. Wallace said he had sent this info to Steven Tyler who is, I believe, a reporter in New Orleans.

Before I forget the "queer joint" name in Baton Rouge was the "Black Lamp"—ever hear of it? I hadn't.

I was astonished when Wallace mentioned that there were a total of 399 boxes in this McCombs collection!

McCombs, said Wallace, once worked for O.N.I as a "spy" & had a fabulous career (married 5 times & all his ~~[illegible]~~ wives died).

Wallace had stated the Hugh Aynesworth was the "chief investigator" for McCombs when "Life" did its secret investigation.

Wallace (see page 4 of the seven page documents) notes a "file on Roy Cooper & Ely Stinges of Oak Cliff" having to do with "films or film rights". I don't recall any of these names at all! I wonder what this is all about?! These gentlemen may still be listed in the Dallas phone directory but I've not yet checked this out. Perhaps I can get Dave Perry to track them down which he is exceptionally good at.

Other intriguing items (on this page 4): "general conspiracy notes"; "Governor Connally's wounding"; "Jerry Fine" (who is he?) had a friend & his reference to Oswald; "general review of anti-Warren Commission materials" (& your name could possibly be in that file)

Page 6 of the documents refers to a Russell Wence McLarry, Dallas machinist "(who is he??); "Parkland and dead shot, including handwritten notes" (my underlining but I wonder whose notes?

There probably is a lot more but I believe I've given you enough to digest for now.

(By the way note the Web Codes at top & bottom of page 7. If you know anyone using the Internet that is how to access these files, I guess. Of course, you can also write Wallace for more info.

I better close for now (hand's getting tired!). Best,

Hal